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Interview with
JOSEPH B. POMERANCE
December 6, 1980

Place of Interview: Orlando, Florida

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved:

Joseph B. Pomerance
(Signature)

Date:

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Oral History Collection

Dr. Joseph B. Pomerance, M.D.

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Orlando, Florida Date: December 6, 1980

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Dr. Joseph B. Pomerance for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 6, 1980, in Orlando, Florida. I'm interviewing Dr. Pomerance in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was assigned to the Station Hospital at Hickam Field during the Japanese attack there on December 7, 1941.

Dr. Pomerance: Actually, I was assigned to the 31st Bomb Squadron in an indirect way for a couple of days, but I was basically at the Station Hospital until I went with the 394th Bomb Squadron, which is part of the 5th Bomb Group, which is the same unit that the 31st belonged to. Basically, consider me a doctor knowing what was going on from that rather from the narrow-minded viewpoint of being a member of the 31st.

Dr. Marcello: To begin this interview, Dr. Pomerance, give me a brief biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were

born, your education--things of that nature.

Pomerance: I was born in Augusta, Georgia, in the year of 1910. I went to school--never brilliant--and graduated from medical school in 1932. From then on I served in the city hospital in Columbus, Georgia. Then I was with the Civilian Conservation Corps for a couple of years. Then I had a commission with the United States Public Health Service for about six months. Then I took a commission in the Army and went to practice medicine in Miami, Florida. At the end of 1940, I packed my bags and went on active duty with the United States Army in Camp Beauregard, Louisiana.

Marcello: Why did you decide to take a commission in the Army?

Pomerance: I always had a liking for military affairs. In our high school, we had an equivalent to an R.O.T.C. unit, and I enjoyed it. When I went to the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, I enjoyed being in the cavalry and riding horses. Frankly, I just enjoyed it.

Marcello: You mentioned that your first duty station was at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana? How long did you remain there?

Pomerance: I was at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, about three months. The weather was miserable--freezing and everything else. I went to put in for the School of Aviation Medicine at Randolph Field, Texas, and I was accepted and sent over there, and the weather was more desirable there.

When I got through with the School of Aviation Medicine,

they decided to send me to the land of coconuts and swinging hula girls. So I went by boat, Matson liner, the Monterrey, to Hawaii--the most pleasurable trip that I ever took in my life--and I enjoyed it.

Marcello: How long did it take at that time to go from the West Coast to Honolulu? Do you recall?

Pomerance: Five days. It was a very enjoyable trip, very nice. There were a lot of girls and everything you wanted. It was a form of luxury that I had never had before in my life.

Marcello: Now were you single or married at that time.

Pomerance: I was single.

Marcello: Were you in the Army Air Corps specifically at this time?

Pomerance: No, sir. There was no Army Air Corps specifically at that time. I was assigned to the Station Hospital at Hickam Field, Hawaii.

Marcello: As a member of the United States Army?

Pomerance: As a member of the United States Army. In fact, all of the Air Force personnel were part of the United States Army at that time.

Marcello: Describe what the hospital facilities were like there at the Station Hospital when you arrived.

Pomerance: The hospital . . . we had a good out-patient department. We had several operating rooms and about twenty hospital beds. We didn't have too many personnel. I don't think that there were but about eight doctors on the whole staff.

If they had someone who required extensive surgery, they were always sent to Tripler General Hospital. We more or less acted like a first aid center and a minor hospital rather than a major hospital.

Marcello: In your particular case, were you a general practitioner here?

Pomerance: Well, I had several particular assignments. For a while I was in charge of the laboratories; I was chief of the Department of Medicine. In addition to my duties of head of that, which was really boring--taking care of the ordinary GI's for colds and the equivalent--I studied a little psychiatry, and I became the psychiatrist for the base and gave psychiatric examinations to all those that were indicated, including all the prisoners. That's about it.

Marcello: What sort of schedule would you have had there at the Station Hospital during that period prior to December 7, 1941?

Pomerance: You got up in the morning, had a nice breakfast, then were bored until noon. You'd have a nice lunch and be bored until about four o'clock in the afternoon when we would take off to the Officer's Club. Then we'd take a couple of drinks and then wait for the crowds to get in to shoot craps, play the slot machines, or play poker.

Marcello: So you did have a more or less . . . I don't want to call

it an eight-to-five job, but you did have the same specific hours that you were working every day.

Pomerance: More or less. But if you wanted to go someplace, there was no question in getting off.

Marcello: How did your weekend routine work?

Pomerance: I filled up the tank to my car with gas and took off to anyplace I saw fit--one side of the island or the other. A lot of the time I spent with my Kanaka girlfriend and my friends. We enjoyed ourselves.

Marcello: What particular kinds of activities did you like to engage in when you were off duty?

Pomerance: Dames, dice, poker, and slot machines. And we figured out how to beat those slot machines--not the "one-armed bandits" but the other kinds. Some of those young pilots, they knew ways and means of figuring out those machines. In fact, they had one dice machine where two of them rolled around, and you could bet over seven or under seven or any way. Just like keeping statistics on the number that would come up after other numbers, they could empty the machines. For a while the guy used to walk into Hickam Field with an empty bag and walk out with a bagful of coins. Then it got so that he would walk into the club with a bagful of coins and go out with an empty bag. As soon as he would leave the place, somebody would make a rush for the machine to empty them (chuckle).

Marcello: Awhile ago you were describing your routine there at Hickam, and you indicated rather directly that there was a great deal of boredom involved. Was this simply because of the routine nature of the activities there at the hospital?

Pomerance: There was nothing really stimulating. That's the reason I took on the assignment of psychiatrist, because it gave me a chance to go back and have a reason for reviewing certain works and writing reports. Otherwise, I could have stagnated.

Marcello: What kind of quarters did you have there at Hickam? I assume that you were living on the base.

Pomerance: I had nice quarters. I had a nice one-bedroom apartment, furnished fairly well. It was quite adequate, really.

Marcello: Was this over in an area that they would have called the Bachelor Officer Quarters?

Pomerance: B.O.Q. This was a nice concrete building; it was a permanent building. Later on, after the war started, I had a three-bedroom, two-bath duplex.

Marcello: Right there on Hickam?

Pomerance: At Hickam.

Marcello: I understand that in that pre-Pearl Harbor period there was a great deal of formal entertaining that went on among the military. Was this true there at Hickam, while you were there, just before the war?

Pomerance: We had plenty of social activities at the Officer's Club. There was plenty of drinking, if that's what you mean, by

the high brass and lower brass. The higher brass had their own parties with their own crowd, and they didn't mingle with us ordinary officers. But there is no question that they had the same thing before the war as well as after the war. Before the war no one seemed to pay any attention or any care to that a war may come or gave any thought to it.

Marcello: This more or less leads into my next question. As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, could you detect any changes in your routine there at the hospital. Were there any preparations being made for the eventuality of war?

Pomerance: There were no changes, period. Once in awhile they would declare an alert, saying that they dispersed the airplanes and put them behind bunkers, and the alert would last three or four days. Once in awhile they would start searching people coming in to the base. But essentially there was nothing done, period.

Marcello: During these alerts would your routine at the hospital be changed in any way?

Pomerance: Not especially.

Marcello: How well-equipped was this hospital there at Hickam?

Pomerance: Oh, it was a well-equipped hospital, no question about that; I mean, they had all the equipment that we needed and that we could use.

- Marcello: But like you said awhile ago, for the more serious cases they would be sent over to Tripler.
- Pomerance: Well, they had specialists in all the fields. We were too small a hospital for all that.
- Marcello: When you and your colleagues sat around in conversation and so on, how much was discussed about the possibility of war between the United States and Japan?
- Pomerance: Very little, if anything. I mean, they would casually mention it as an object of conversation, but the base essentially continued its routine the same way all the time, and they modified it slightly when they would declare an alert, which would last two or three days. Then they would go back to the basic routine. The parties continued. I think that at the Officer's Club at Hickam Field, we'd lose something like \$20,000 on one party. Every weekend we had girls coming by and dancing and playing the ukulele. It was a very enjoyable life.
- Marcello: Is it accurate for me to surmise, then, that even if war did come between the United States and Japan, most everybody felt pretty safe and secure there, that is, the Japanese would never be able to hit the Hawaiian Islands?
- Pomerance: I wouldn't say that. I never felt safe and secure. I thought that if I had a company of about a hundred men, I could practically take over the whole island because of complete irresponsibility from the top. Some of those at

the bottom were worrying about certain situations, but the men on the top were just like trained dummies, waiting for orders from somebody telling them exactly what to do. No one seemed to show any initiative regarding anything.

Marcello: Can you elaborate on this in any way?

Pomerance: Well, to go ahead and lead up to the war, they started coming out and saying, "Well, we weren't prepared. The fighter planes have no machine guns." We didn't even have any machine guns for the fighter planes. One of the reasons they didn't have machine guns on the fighter planes was because they were locked up in the armament section. They didn't want them on the planes; they might rust. The bombs for the B-17's . . . they couldn't take off and look for the Japanese fleet because they had no bombs. The bombs were in the armament section where they were in underground bunkers where they were stored, and nobody had the key. When the Japs came over, where were the machine guns around, or where were the antiaircraft guns? Over there at Fort Shafter or something, not too far from Hickam Field. When the Jap planes came over, they were using antiaircraft guns at the planes, and they were only shooting about 180 degrees off-course. It's impossible to shoot anymore in the wrong direction. Just complete irresponsibility.

Marcello: On who would you lay the responsibility for this lack of

preparedness?

Pomerance: Naturally, the responsibility goes up toward the top, but I would lay the lack of responsibility on the commanding officer of the Hawaiian Department, who had control of everyone at Hickam Field and Bellows Field, Wheeler Field, Schofield Barracks, and those places. They would bring out the fact that they weren't warned, that they didn't know that the attack was coming. Well, I think that it was on the Tuesday before the attack that every officer at Hickam Field had to go to base headquarters and read a telegram and initial the fact that he had read it. The telegram read essentially as follows: "Intelligence reports that the Japanese fleet has left its main base in Sasebo, sailing in an easterly direction and that contact with the Japanese fleet has been lost. In view of the present relations between the United States and Japan, a surprise attack upon Midway or even Hawaii would not be unexpected. Please take the necessary measures." Immediately, an order came out from the base commander that there would be a strict alert in effect from that moment until Saturday noon.

Marcello: You mentioned this telegram awhile ago, and I think that it is pretty important. I'm glad that you brought up the subject. You personally read that telegram and initialed it thusly?

Pomerance: I did.

- Marcello: And every other officer on the base did, also.
- Pomerance: Was supposed to have done the same thing.
- Marcello: Well, certainly those that would have been directly in charge of the defenses of the base would have read it.
- Pomerance: Every officer was directed to report to the base headquarters, read the telegram, and initial it. The commanding officer then came out with his order for an alert from that moment until Saturday noon. So they were on a so-called alert, and the airplanes were dispersed until Saturday noon. After that the alert was off, the airplanes were bunched together right down the flight line, and everybody took off for their usual partying.
- Marcello: During this period of alert, how did it affect you at the Station Hospital?
- Pomerance: Directly, it did not affect us at all because we were always more or less ready. There was no change in the routine.

But I can also tell you this much, too, although it's hearsay. Since the alert was going to be off on Saturday noon, the Japanese consul had a big party scheduled for the Army brass and the Navy brass, and he had all the booze in the world, the fancy champagnes, the prettiest hula girls, and, I expect, every high-grade whore. All the admirals and generals and colonels went because that was going to be a party. I can say that he did have a wonderful party. They

were all out until the early hours of the morning.

Marcello: Did you go to that party yourself?

Pomerance: No, that was almost strictly for admirals, generals, and at least colonels.

Marcello: You mentioned that as a response to that telegram, an alert was put into effect, and this alert continued until Saturday noon, December 6. At that point the alert was called off, and the men dispersed to wherever they were going to go.

Pomerance: Right.

Marcello: What did you do that Saturday evening of December 6?

Pomerance: I don't recall exactly. I'm sure that I most have gone to the Officer's Club, taken a few drinks. I wasn't feeling too well, and I just went to bed.

Marcello: Approximately what time would you estimate that you went to bed that evening?

Pomerance: Maybe eleven, twelve o'clock.

Marcello: And am I to assume this was a rather routine Saturday evening at the Officer's Club and so on?

Pomerance: Yes. They had a party there, and they were carousing and so forth.

Marcello: When we say that there were parties at the Officer's Club and there was carousing and so on, could you possibly be a little more specific. In other words, would there be a lot of drunks leaving the Officer's Club on a Saturday night?

Pomerance: There usually was. They would go down and drink until they couldn't hold anymore, and they would walk out under their own power and go home. I don't want to get personal with some people, but a lot of them would go to whorehouses downtown in Honolulu. I went a few times with friends of mine, but that's another story, though.

Marcello: So this brings us into that Sunday morning of December 7, 1941, and what I want you to do is go into the details of what happened to you personally in terms of what you did and what you observed on that Sunday morning. First of all, maybe I should ask this. Did you plan to sleep in on Sunday morning?

Pomerance: I usually do. It's getting a little vague. If I'm not mistaken . . . I'm almost forgetting whether it was seven o'clock in the morning or eight o'clock that it started.

Marcello: It was near eight o'clock.

Pomerance: It was near eight o'clock at the time. I was in bed sleeping, and I heard something that sounded like blasting. I paid no attention to it.

Marcello: How far were your quarters from the flight line or the barracks and things like that, which were the initial target?

Pomerance: At Hickam Field my quarters were only about, I guess, a block or half a block from the first target. We heard some blasting and were saying, "Why the hell are they blasting on Sunday morning?" I stayed in bed. But the blasting

continued, and I was getting a little bit perturbed about it. Then my alarm clock bounced off the dresser and made a parabolic curve and hit the floor and broke the dial. I got up and got dressed, and I was mad as hell, wondering what had happened.

I walked outside the quarters toward the barracks, which they called "Splinter City," where there was a half-dozen pilots watching. These airplanes were just flying about 300 feet over me. I waved to the pilot, and I'll always remember that the pilot waved right back at me.

Marcello: Where were these planes coming from? Were they coming from the direction of Pearl Harbor?

Pomerance: No, they were just flying around. I have no idea where they were coming from.

Marcello: Were they flying at a high rate of speed, or did they just seem to be gliding?

Pomerance: Oh, they were taking their time. They were just flying around. They were just flying over and picking their target.

Then the next time one of the planes came in the same general direction, I jumped to the ground. I was worrying that he might start strafing, but the other pilots were just looking and making no movement. I got in my car and went to the hospital to go to work.

Marcello: Now all this . . .

Pomerance: I can also tell you that, so far as I'm concerned, one of the

best-aimed bombs in the war was the first one they dropped on Hickam Field, which got the fire house and the only air raid alarm on the base. So at that time we never got an air raid warning.

Marcello: That was the next question that I was going to ask, that is, whether or not there was an air raid warning. And there wasn't.

Pomerance: There was not.

Marcello: At the moment that you saw that plane with the Rising Sun on it, did you know that it was a Japanese plane?

Pomerance: It just sank in a little bit. For a moment I thought that it was very peculiar for one of our planes, and then I saw the Rising Sun, then I could see the battleships burning in Pearl Harbor in the background. Then I saw that the fire house was blowing up.

Marcello: About how much time elapsed before you moved from the BOQ over to the hospital?

Pomerance: Maybe ten or fifteen minutes.

Marcello: Was your trip over to the hospital rather uneventful other than hurried?

Pomerance: It was hurried; it was uneventful. I got there just about the time they started bringing in casualties. Some of them were being brought in by ambulance; most of them were being brought in by truck as there were insufficient ambulances. As soon as they got them over there, we started sorting

out those that had wounds and shipped them off to Tripler General Hospital, which was not under attack. We more or less gave first aid, and we also had a rather large veranda around our place, and after the wounded were all brought in, it was just covered with dead and dying men. You could see them with the top of their skulls blown off and still breathing. In fact, one of the doctors went around giving them shots of morphine because they were hopeless, and there was no use in moving them to Tripler, with the whole top of their skulls blown off and their brains exposed. You could see their guts all hanging out or their legs blown off or with other injuries. That I will always remember.

Marcello: What particular functions were you performing that day, or was it just a case of doing whatever had to be done according to that patient?

Pomerance: There really was nothing that we could do. One of the doctors over there--in fact, there were two of them--who was a very capable surgeon started to work and do a major operation on somebody that got a wound, but that was rather foolish because we had them coming in by the thousands. He was trying to take care of one of them. The best thing would have been to take care of him by giving him emergency treatment and shipping him off to other places where they could get a more fair treatment. We just didn't have the

personnel.

Marcello: I gather that during this period, the hospital itself did not come under any direct attack by the Japanese.

Pomerance: Oh, yes, it did. The base headquarters was about half a block away, and it was under attack by machine gun fire a few times. The hospital . . . on one of the last bombing runs, they came by and dropped a bomb, I think, to get the hospital because it exploded only about ten or fifteen feet away from the hospital. They used machine guns on the hospital. So I wouldn't say that they didn't try to get it. They wanted to get it as the last one, presumably after it was filled up.

Marcello: Eventually, did things get pretty well organized over there in the hospital, or was it chaos all the way through?

Pomerance: No, the hospital got things pretty well organized in pretty short order, I mean, after transferring all the patients. The commanding officer, only captain then, was Frank Lane. He did a beautiful job of expediting things. He used a lot of common sense, and he went ahead and shipped out the worst cases, so really all we did was take care of minor injuries.

But so far as the chaos is concerned, that was with base headquarters and the commanding officer. He was so damned scared to go to base headquarters that he stayed in his quarters where nobody could find him. So no one took the

direction of the post and gave or issued any orders except the hospital. In fact, the hospital took over the whole function of the base practically. Since the mess hall was gone, we fed the base, we issued ammunition, we issued helmets. You tell us what we didn't do! The commanding officer, they couldn't find him.

Marcello: And all of this was actually done through and from the hospital.

Pomerance: It was all done from the hospital. So far as I'm concerned, Bill Farthing hid in his quarters, and nobody got an order from him about anything. So all the orders that were issued on the base came from the commanding officer of the hospital, Dr. Frank Lane. He was a captain then, and he did such a wonderful job that they promoted him afterwards.

Marcello: How did your medical supplies hold out there at the Station Hospital while all of this was taking place?

Pomerance: Oh, we were loaded. We had plenty of supplies there. There's no question about it. They kept it well-supplied.

Marcello: How large a staff of nurses and medics and orderlies and so on would you have had there? You would probably have to estimate this, of course.

Pomerance: I don't think that we had more than about forty or fifty base personnel all combined.

Marcello: What would you do with the ones that you did actually treat there at the hospital, that is, those that had

superficial wounds and so on? Were they kept there at the hospital, or would you send them some other place?

Pomerance: A few of them may have been kept in the hospital. Most of them were sent back to duty. They could come in for dressings and so forth. We did have trouble--not immediately then, but shortly afterwards--with some persons that were mental patients that presumably were having nervous breakdowns. When we get around to it, I can tell you of one interesting case that stays with me.

Marcello: Did this sort of thing occur during the attack itself?

Pomerance: No, very little. It probably started maybe about four or five days after the attack.

Marcello: Generally speaking, what kind of superficial wounds were you treating there at the hospital?

Pomerance: I really don't remember. There was some bullet wounds.

Marcello: Some shrapnel, I'm sure.

Pomerance: Some shrapnel wounds. I guess that there were sprained arms or sprained ankles or so forth. There was nothing very serious.

Marcello: And how long did this activity continue there at the hospital? Did it occur all of that day and into the night?

Pomerance: Oh, we were doing sewing up and everything, I'd say, for maybe twelve hours.

Marcello: When did you finally get relieved, do you recall, get a break or get something to eat, whatever?

Pomerance: Oh, we had time. Oh, three or four hours, maybe six hours, after it started. I don't remember exactly. You see, we had our own hospital mess, which was a very good mess, and you could take turns and go there to get a bite to eat with no trouble. We had the mess working on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis because we had to feed the whole base, practically.

Marcello: That evening were you having to work under blackout conditions? In other words, I'm sure that there were rumors going around--and you had no reason not to believe them--that the Japanese might come back and perhaps might even invade the island.

Pomerance: Well, we had all kinds of rumors floating around, but we didn't pay too much attention to them, really. The whole thing was ridiculous, with those rumors that were floating around. Some of the rumors were that the Japs had landed parachutists at Makapuu Point or somewhere. What the parachutists turned out to be, a couple of Jap planes were shot down, and the pilots were parachuting out, and that was the Jap parachutists that had landed. I think that there were submarines--the men got out of the submarines--and they thought that that was an invasion. But most of the shoreline around Hawaii is not suitable for landing ships, anyway, because of the rocks.

Marcello: I'm sure you could hear any kind of rumor that you wanted to.

Pomerance: Oh, they had rumors. They had their imagination running away from them. Some poor Navy plane--I think it was a Navy plane--was coming in at dark from the States and wanted to land. He came in with his landing lights on because the landing field was naturally darkened, and when he was just above the ground, they cut loose on him with so many machine guns that they destroyed the plane and all of the occupants. Then they tried to pass that off as if it was a Japanese plane trying to sneak in.

Marcello: Were all these rumors running rampant through the hospital, also? Did you hear them over there?

Pomerance: We didn't pay too much attention to them. They didn't come from the hospital; they came from others. It was dangerous, really, to walk outside of the hospital, in fact, to walk anywhere.

Marcello: In other words, you could hear sporadic gunfire all night.

Pomerance: You could hear that all the time. In fact, when I started walking around at night, I used to go ahead and start whistling "Rambling Wreck from Georgia Tech" out loud so that no trigger-happy GI would start taking a potshot at me. Otherwise, I'd say it was dangerous.

Marcello: What did you do in the following days after the attack?

Pomerance: Nothing special. I tell you what I'd like to tell you beforehand that might be interesting. Welch and Taylor were under court-martial proceedings that were being

instituted to separate them from the service because of alcoholism. At the time of the attack, they were coming in from partying downtown, and they knew that at Haleiwa landing strip there were some planes already gassed up and with ammunition. I think that each plane had two machine guns on it which they used for gunnery practice. So they went and took off in those planes, and they were the only really fighter opposition that the Japanese had that day. I think that each one of them shot down two Japanese planes apiece. So now instead of going back to the States for the court-martial proceedings, they went back as heroes. They were sent back probably within a week to become a hero to help with bond sales or the equivalent. Personally, they was just nice guys, and I think that they were just plain bored over there in Hawaii.

Marcello: And did you say that you had actually met one or both of them at one time or another.

Pomerance: I met them once. I think I met them at Schofield Barracks once.

Marcello: Do you remember anything about them, other than the fact that you simply met them?

Pomerance: No, I don't remember.

Marcello: What did you do in the days following the attack? What kind of activities were taking place over at the hospital?

Pomerance: Just taking care of the wounds, dressing them, taking care

of sore throats, pneumonia, or whatever they had, and also the mental patients.

And there was one mental patient that stood out with me, which might be an interesting lesson. This fellow who was an officer, came in and said that the whole attack was due to the fact that he went ahead and took a couple of drinks of whiskey, and he knew that was contrary to his religion and that God was trying to punish him because he didn't live up to his commandments, that he had gotten drunk on one or maybe two occasions. And I looked at him, and I said, "Don't you get so conceited! God doesn't think that you're that important to go out and kill all of these other people just to punish you!" Anyway, I sent him back to the States as a mental case.

Marcello: Approximately how many of these mental cases did you have that were directly attributable to the attack?

Pomerance: Not too many, maybe a dozen. Basically, you don't really attribute any of them to the attack. Really, the disease or sickness was there. The attack may have precipitated it, but usually they are about ready for a nervous breakdown, anyway. Usually, it's something within them and their conscience.

Marcello: I know that on one occasion--at least it was told to me in the interview--that the hospital there at Hickam sent out for liquor from the Officer's Club, and I guess that

this was to be used for some sort of a anesthetic or something. Do you recall that or anything about that?

Pomerance: Yes. I think that that was strictly fabrication because we had our own booze in the hospital, and we had plenty of it. We didn't run out of booze in the hospital, so why should they send out to get whiskey?

Marcello: Did you ever have any opportunity to get down to Tripler and work down there, or was all of your work relative to the attack done right there at the Station Hospital?

Pomerance: Oh, I was over at Tripler, and I met some of the fellows over there who weren't working, but then I got disgusted with Tripler because I got involved with an old Army sergeant who worked at Tripler Hospital, and his commanding officer was trying to get him kicked out of the service because he was an alcoholic. One of the officers who was a lawyer at Hickam Field was going to defend him, and he asked me to help him. I thought that with all my friends at Tripler Hospital, I would get the official psychiatrist to help me work with the case, and the psychiatrist refused: "Please don't get me involved with that! It's going to hurt me! Don't ask me to go ahead and testify as an expert witness in the case!" Why couldn't I get a doctor from Tripler General Hospital to testify as an expert witness on a case? Well, the commanding officer of the hospital was the complainer. I thought they were a bunch of yellow

bellies.

Marcello: From what you've been saying since this interview started, there was a great deal of drinking and things like that that went on at Hickam Field among the officers.

Pomerance: Among the officers, enlisted men, and downtown, too.

Marcello: Do you think this was a result of the boredom that you talked about previously?

Pomerance: Well, you can go ahead and call it boredom. They were bored because most of them didn't have too much work to do. What they should have been doing was at least putting in some time and effort in what their job was supposed to be--to prepare themselves. They should have gone ahead and worked out different contingencies for an attack, for what they're going to do.

But they did not organize properly; they did not do anything. The commanding officer was more or less like a trained seal. If someone didn't tell him to order something, nothing was done. The GI's, the ordinary enlisted men, I had tremendous respect for. The flying officers, yes, they were wonderful. But the so-called base command, they stunk. The same thing applies to Bill Farthing, who was the commanding officer at Hickam Field, and Admiral Kimmel, who was the commander of the naval base. Personally, I think that they both should have been shot.

Marcello: How long did you remain on the Hawaiian Islands after the attack occurred? Did you remain there for the duration?

Pomerance: No, shortly after the attack, I was transferred to the 5th Bomb Group, 394th Bomb Squadron. They went down to the South Pacific. The 394th was left behind as a teaching squadron. I stayed with them until about October of '42, and then we went on down to the South Pacific.

Marcello: Well, Dr. Pomerance, I think that this is probably a good place to end this interview. I want to thank you very much for having talked to me. You've said some things I hadn't heard from any of the other interviewees, and I certainly appreciate that because that is the sort of thing that we are looking for.